A method for expressing function through the designs of "Splatoon." An interview with the development staff, looking at character, weapon, and gear designs.

text in dark yellow are translations from Nintendo Everything, taken from their articles here and here.
Text in dark blue translated by Splattwig.
Text in black translated by rassicas. Formatting and additional editing and revisions done by rassicas.
Much of this interview was initially translated using DeepL web translator, and then checked and manually edited for quality and accuracy.

Article link: *https://www.famitsu.com/news/201509/09087846.html*

---PAGE 1---

Left: Hisashi Nogami, Producer (Nogami in the text)
Center: Seita Inoue, Art Director (Inoue in the text)
Right: Keisuke Nishimori, Designer (Nishimori in the text)

The Inklings are saucy and satisfied with their lives?!

--First of all, can you tell us about the part of the game you were in charge of this time, and the work that you've done in the past?
Inoue: I'm in charge of the overall art direction and various illustrations. My previous work was art direction for the Wii U console. Prior to that, I designed the UI (user

interface) and trains for *The Legend of Zelda: Spirit Tracks* for the Nintendo DS, and I was also involved with *Animal Crossing: City Folk.*

--You've done a lot of illustrations over time , is this the first time you've done this much work?
Inoue: At first, I drew them as concept art, not for the world to see.
Nogami: Incidentally, it's sometimes written on the Internet that Inoue and Sakaguchi are the ones who designed Midna in The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess, But that's not true. Sakaguchi designed some of the characters in Twilight Princess, so that's why people are saying that, but Midna was designed by other designers within the company. I thought I'd have to clear up the misunderstanding somewhere ..... (laughs).

--That was certainly a hot topic! Next, please tell us about your work, Mr. Nishimori.
Nishimori: In "Splatoon", I was managing the designers and doing design direction for the signs and graffiti on the streets and in the stages, as well as the gear that players wear, such as clothes and shoes. Before that, I was in charge of the player design for *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess.*

--Please tell us again about the distinctive design concept of this game.
Nogami: The concept, or rather the design, is the first introduction to the game, so we started by talking about the functions to be used and what kind of design we would use for those functions.
Inoue: In the initial proposal stage, we were talking about a black and white battle between people who wash and people who get dirty, but the first design featured an anthropomorphic rabbit. Personally, rather than trying to make it stylish, I like simple things with messy gadgets, and I cherish the happy times I had as a child with things like Bomberman and Mini 4WD. That's why the gadgets in this game, such as the high-tech watches and neon-colored sneakers, try to capture the image of the time when I was fascinated by things like that.
Nishimori: It's a reminder of the time when people would be envious of you on the street if you had an item that came in a limited color.

--Was the characters’ “heads tall” ratio were firmly decided when characters were still rabbits?
Inoue: That wasn’t changed to an extent. As this is an action game, if you don’t make the action easy to see to a certain degree, it feels out of touch, so it was decided to have big legs and hands
Nogami: There was also a reason to have a low ‘heads tall’ ratio. You can tell when a character is covered in ink from an attack because the head is big. It isn't just to make them look cute.

Concept art from the days when the main character was a rabbit.

--I see that you've drawn many pieces of concept art, but there were also drawings of festivals from that time.
Inoue: This was drawn about a month or two after the start of production.
Nogami As you can see now, we had the idea of holding regular events in-game from the beginning.
Nishimori: Since it's a new game, we wanted to let as many people know about it as possible, so we thought we'd offer a lot of tricks to get people who hadn't played the game talking about it on Twitter.

--I'd like to ask you about the key points of the character designs, but the feel of the illustrations is also impressive.
Inoue: Originally, when you make a 3D model, there are no outlines, so this lineless way of drawing reduces the discrepancy between the concept and the 3D model. In games, it's quite common for a character to look cute in the illustration, but not so cute in 3D. We wanted to minimize the gap, so we decided to use this as part of the concept work, not as an illustration.

--What were the main points you focused on in the design of the Inkling Boy and Girl?

Inoue: I wanted to make elements such as the eyes and tentacles easily visible, but the form and silhouette were given a great deal of attention. Having a broader pelvis than shoulder width and the athlete-like form give an impression of a sporty character who is satisfied with his/her real life (laughs). The Inkling boy and girl were drawn as 17-year-olds at the time of designing and they have an ‘I’m cool’ attitude. It seems like 17-year-old girls think they’re the strongest beings alive. I thought like that, too. ”
Nogami: It’s like there is nothing scary in the world (laughs).

Inoue: That also fits well with the setting of Inklings being mischievous and shooting ink. That age is the last moment for seeing painting ink as something cool. If Inklings were a little older, it would be a bit childish. The messing around was designed to look like a sport. Later the corners of the Inklings mouth and the bottom of their eyelids were raised. As a result, they weren’t quite that cute looking and they got a cheeky mood to them. We thought a great deal of that kind of image.

--I see.
Inoue: The girl and the boy were drawn with the same kind of image in mind, but when comparing the boy and girl, the boy has a somewhat obedient image. However, they share the same age.”
Nogami*:* When it comes to the setting, they are 14 years old, but they were designed as having a mood of 16-17-year-olds.

--I think a main point of the Inkling is the black area around her eyes. Did you have this design in mind from the beginning? It reminds me of something like Bloopers from the "Mario" series.
Inoue: It's not like that because of Bloopers. It was inspired by the black makeup that punk rock musicians wear around their eyes.

--So it doesn't have much to do with them being squids (laughs).
Inoue: I thought that a bit of a rough attitude, similar to a just-debuted rock singer, fit this game. This is how that mood turned into an image.
Nogami: People have their own opinions about the design, whether it's cute or creepy, but I think the worst thing that can happen is that people are not interested. Even if people don't like something, it is possible that something will trigger a reversal of that opinion, so I try to create designs with hooks, rather than bland designs, so that people will be interested.

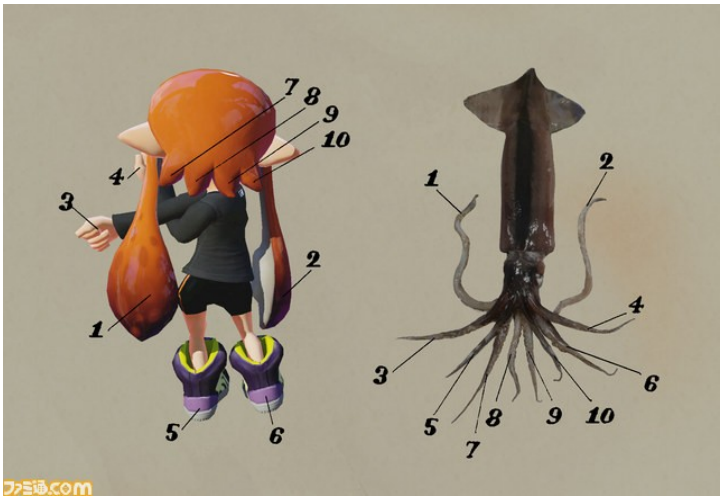
--Looking at your designs, did you initially have girls in mind?
Inoue: “The main emphasis was on the girl, to the extent that we thought at first whether it would be alright to not have a boy (laughs).
Nishimori: When having a chance to design a new character, there is the fact that it’s rare to have a girl lead in a Nintendo title and also having a strong and active

female may make it easier to become accepted overseas. The design was centered on the girl at first, and then the design of a boy was thought of in comparison.

The initial design for the girl.

--The boy's haircut is impressive.
Inoue: At first,we had something that looked more normal, but it didn't really catch our eye, and it also didn't look like he'd be into sports. The image of whether or not a person is likely to play sports is also very important, and I decided to go with the image of someone who is likely to play extreme sports rather than simply looking cool.

--In the past, there was a Twitter post about their hairstyles that said they had 10 legs, the same as a squid's. Were you aware of this from the beginning?
Inoue: Yes, I was thinking about it. Since the character is a squid, I thought it was very important to have 10 legs, and I wanted to make sure that adults would not lie about it when I tell children that the squid has ten legs. Octolings also have four tentacle-like limbs each, so they have eight limbs. If it didn't have eight or ten limbs, I think people would be disappointed.
Nogami It's an image that becomes more convincing thanks to the design.
Inoue: But I've made some adjustments with the number of tentacles at the nape of the Inkling’s neck (laughs).



--I'm amazed at how detailed the design is. The figure of the squid is deformed, and it has two large feet, doesn't it?
Inoue: Since this is a game where you switch between human and squid, I designed each of them to be easily recognizable as an icon when you look at them, and to look like a straightforward squid.
Nogami: The fluttering parts of the squid were also attached to the main characters when they were rabbits. These fluttering parts move with the characters when they are in motion, so I designed the characters in such a way that they can move comfortably in action.
Inoue: For the squid, I had already decided on the elements that would make it look like a squid, so I decided on the form by making the body line S-shaped, like a car design. Also, the head is not a pure triangle, but a slightly raised angle at the bottom. This makes it more squid-like. I was very particular about these forms, and the fingers of the girl and boy are in the shape of squid somen.

--It’s squid somen!?
Nogami: If you look closely at the fingertips, you can see that they are square in cross sections.
Inoue: So there are no fingernails or anything. The girl's hairstyle also has bangs that look like a raw squid fillet.

---PAGE 2---

Judd and the Squid Sisters: The story behind the creation of each character

--I'd like to ask you about the other characters as well. Why was Judd, who judges the matches, designed as a cat instead of a sea creature?
Nogami: Judd is a remnant from when the main characters were rabbits, and he's the only mammal left in the world of the squids.

Inoue: Back when the protagonists were rabbits, there was a unifying motif of a tribe of supernatural animals, and I had the idea of having cats, foxes, and raccoons appear in some way, with the rabbits at the center.

--Where are the fox and raccoon ……?
Nogami: There's a statue of a raccoon and a fox in Inkopolis Plaza.

--Oh!　Next to the tower!
Nogami: It's treated as a statue of a deity, but the inhabitants of the Inkling world don't really know why it's designed that way. But they're grateful for it because it's been there for a long time.

--I see. By the way, is that the color of Judd’s body, or is it just his fur?
Inoue: It's his fur. Since he had that kind of fur, people called him "Judd", like the word Judge.　With people around him calling him something like the word judge, he became interested in judging and demonstrated a natural talent for it (laughs).

--(laughs) So he’s developed a brilliant talent (laughs).
Inoue: He must have learned to distinguish even a 0.1% difference (laughs). There's a backstory that Turf War became competitive because of him. Before that, it was a fruitless battle because you couldn't tell who would win, but now that Judd can make decisions that don't overlook a 0.1% difference, it's recognized as a sport.

--So it was not a sport until then?
Inoue: I thought it was something like skateboarding. At first, it was not a competition where you had to win or lose, but people did it because it was cool. I think it started out as a competition because it was cool, but then there were people who were the originators of some of the rules, and it took root as a competition. But I think the Inklings don't particularly appreciate Judd, or rather, since he’s been around for a long time, they take it for granted that he’s there and that he judges.
Nogami: But they’re laying out cushions for him, so they treat him with a certain amount of respect (laughs).

--I'd also like to ask you about the Squid Sisters. I'm sure they're quite popular, but do you think their popularity in the real world has exceeded your expectations?
Nogami: I thought that idols would be accepted a little differently in different countries around the world, but they've been accepted more than I expected.

--Did you have a particular image of idols in mind?
Inoue: Rather than Japanese idols, they are more like foreign idols, with a bit of a sharp edge. There are also some informative programs on local stations and late night shows that are run by idols who are currently selling well. I like the handmade momentum of such programs, and I wanted to really create that feeling that people who are "here and now" have.
I wanted to create an atmosphere of coolness that's just before an explosion of popularity, where people think it's cool to be lazy, so much so that when they become popular nationwide, people around them will say, "Isn't that a bit too sloppy?"
Nogami: They may give off a rascally impression, but they're doing their best, and their abilities are real.

--Did you decide on their personalities from the beginning when you started drawing them?
Inoue: I didn't do the original design, but another person in charge of NPCs (non-player characters) did, and I used that design as the basis for the illustrations. Their function was to act as speakers at the Splatfests, so I was conscious of the fact, and made them be symmetrical in an easy to understand way.
Nogami: The staff was very particular on the dialogue, like 'Marie doesn't say a thing like that', so some adjustments were made. Originally, before they were idols, they were called 'shrine maidens' and their role was to transmit divine messages from god to people.
Inoue: The world of Splatoon takes place 12,000 years after the present time and the Squid Sisters are those who receive messages from 12,000 years ago. Like there would be a discussion of 'rice or bread?' in current time, and those words fly to another planet and bounce back for them to receive. Those divine messages come from kami-sama [kami means a god, sama is an honorific like -san].
Nogami: Kami-sama is written as 'paper' when using kanji [kami has several meanings, two of which are a god and paper], so the topic of Splatfest comes as a fax-like paper. That's where the name kami-sama comes from (laughs).

--It's "paper-like" (laughs). Next, let's talk about Captain Cuttlefish. This design is an old squid, right?
Inoue: Yes, he looks like a dried squid.
Nogami: His name also means that, doesn't it? [Captain Cuttlefish's name in Japanese means 'dried squid']

Inoue: What Captain Cuttlefish is holding looks like a staff, but it is actually a squirt gun.

--Does this mean that in the past, people used to fight with ink?
Nogami: In the past, that may have been the only way to fight in this world.
Inoue: Cuttlefish is the only one who has common sense. The others are basically the spitting image of people who ink all over the place.
Nogami: He is the last Inkling survivor of the Great Turf War that happened between the Inklings and the Octarians long ago.

--Are there many old people in this world?
Nogami: More or less, he’s someone living off his own fighting spirit.... In reality, he’s not supposed to have a lifespan this long.
Inoue: He is about 120 years old now. It is said that he is able to survive by drying his body to increase his life.

--In terms of image, did you draw him as a knowledgeable old man?
Inoue: Partially because the main character was a girl, but I also thought it would be nice to have a character who goes to save her grandfather. That's why Agent 3 is a heroine in terms of position.

--She's a heroine! But Cuttlefish’s clothes are getting pretty tattered, aren't they?
Nogami: I think it's a remnant from the past, and he’s been wearing it for a long time, patching it together. Also, Cuttlefish is the only one who lives at the entrance to Octo Valley, so he's on a mission to keep watch over the place.

--It's a lonely story when you think about it, being alone there all the time.... By the way, is there anything you were particular about in the design of Cuttlefish?
Inoue: The same staff member who was in charge of NPCs for the Squid Sisters did the design for Cuttlefish, and he made him look courageous.
Nogami: There's a sense of a mission that's different from saving a cute princess, isn't there? It's like rescuing a grandpa close to you (laughs).
Inoue: That's a more realistic motivation. In order to save the grandpa, you end up saving the city.
Nogami: But most of the Inklings living in Inkopolis don't even know about Cuttlefish or Octo Valley. It's like a person who happened to wander into a manhole was chosen and appointed as "Agent 3”

--Many people don't even know what an Octarian is, do they?
Nogami: No, they don't. They don't even know why the Great Zapfish disappeared.

--Do you think the disappearance of the Zapfish will have much impact?

Nogami: Everyone says, "It won't affect me," but Cuttlefish thinks that’s a bad idea and sends out an order to get it back. Maybe it's really serious, but many people don't think it's bad.
Inoue: I thought that kind of start was more realistic.
Nogami: In the game as a whole, Hero Mode is a game mode where you play alone, but it's not necessarily a mode that you have to play, so if you're interested in the game, you can play it, and if you want to play against others all the time, you can play Turf War.

--When you play Hero Mode, you can learn about the story.
Nogami: That's right.

--Next, let's talk about Spyke.
Inoue: Spyke is just a sea urchin, isn’t he?
Nogami If you look closely at his body, you'll see that it's colored like the body of a sea urchin.

--That's true!
Inoue: I think Spyke is the easiest character to understand. He's a street vendor, but he's from the countryside, and when he came to the city, he became a dyed-in-the-wool character. He's a handsome guy, so he's been able to get through his life just by the atmosphere, and the people around him help him with things that aren't so hard.

--When I listen to your story, he seems like not a great guy...
Nogami: ..... It’s a setting that I feel is not good to explain in too much detail (laughs).
Inoue: The reason why we have this kind of character is because we thought that it would look more like a real city if there were people like that and the security looked a little bad.
Nogami: Spyke’s place is a place where not all players have to go, it’s instead for those who’ve mastered the game. So I'd say he's hard to get to, or there's not that much good to be had from talking to him at first.
Inoue: But when you talk to him at level 20, he flirts with you or says something like, "Please take me to the top with you!” or something like that.
Nogami: He really knows the ropes, doesn't he?
Inoue: He has the ability to survive off his aloofness.

--I see. How does he get gear from people?
Inoue: If he tells people around him, there are people who will do it for him. That's why he flatters people with a high level and does what he can. However, I think he is aware of the fact that there is a loneliness in his heart that is not satisfied.

--That's a great backstory!

Nogami: Too much backstory (laughs). But when I think about the characters, I think about them all in such depth.

--I see. Also, the Super Sea Snails next to Spyke looks almost like the Super Mushroom from Super Mario, don’t they?
Nogami That's right. It looks like that (laughs).

---PAGE 3---

The story behind the creation of the shop clerks at Booyah Base

--Next, I'd like to ask about the characters related to the shops. Could you tell us about Sheldon?
Inoue: Sheldon is a straightforward military enthusiast. He wanted to join the army, but couldn't due to his nearsightedness.
Nogami: He’s a big fan of weapons, and he loves taking apart weapons and has been doing it for a long time. So much so, that he's become nearsighted and due to that, couldn't join the army. He had no other choice but to take over the family business and sell weapons.
Inoue: He comes from a good family.
Nogami The land on which Booyah Base is built also belongs to Sheldon's family.

--Oh, so he's the owner.
Nogami: Only his name appears in the game, but I think his grandfather, Ammoses Shellendorf, was the landowner.

--Does he have binoculars for eyes?
Inoue: No, his glasses, or rather his lenses, are binoculars. He’s too nearsighted to see without such thick lenses. He talks about the weapons in detail, but he's designed to look like a character that likes to talk, which was a big order for us.

--Then, please tell us about Annie & Moe.
Inoue: I imagine Annie as a part-time worker at a store that deals in subculture-related goods.
Nogami: She's a subculture girl.
Inoue: When I was the age of player Inklings, people like that were the object of admiration. That's the sort of feeling I'm trying to convey here.

--Is Moe always with her?
Nogami: Annie is a sea anemone, so he lives on her head. For some reason, he's the only character in Splatoon that's a fish. He hasn't evolved much.

--So he's not a pet, but a symbiote?
Nogami: That's right.
Inoue: He doesn't really do anything, but he says overly proud things from the safety of Annie's head.
Nogami: He's a shy type (laughs).

--Oh, that's easy to understand (laughs). Next I'd like to ask you about Jelonzo, the clothing shopkeeper.
Inoue: He's someone who is too fashionable to understand. Whenever he goes to fashion shows or other places where fashion is at the forefront, there are certain fashions that he admires even though he doesn't know what they look like to the average person. That's the sort of feeling he gives off.

Nogami: There are people that are fashionable to the point that if that person is wearing something, everything thinks it must be cool. Jelonzo is also a fashion leader like that.

--The T-shirts he wears are different every day, aren't they?
Inoue: Yes. He wears it without hesitation. He's a fashionista. I don't think many people would go out of their way to call someone a "fashionista," but he's reached that level.
Nogami: He's the only jellyfish that can talk, and he's also the only one with exceptional talent.

--Can't the other jellyfish in the plaza talk?
Inoue: The jellyfish in the plaza do all sorts of things on stage, such as graffiti, but some of them pretend to be doing such things. In the end, they aren't really doing anything. It's just like a concept.
Nogami: Functionally, it's just a bunch of other people.

--It's deep! Next, I'd like to talk about Crusty Sean, the shoe shopkeeper. He's the only one who's been fried, but is it supposed to give off the feeling of western-style clothing?
Inoue: Yeah, it's clothing.

--So it is clothing!
Nogami: Last time, a new research report was added. When he goes home, he re-fries the clothes in the bath, and it becomes crispy every day. At night, it's a little fluffy, so he re-fries it again.

--That's our (Weekly Famitsu) four-panel manga (laughs).
Nogami: I let my research tell me what I need to know.(laughs).

--Thank you very much!
Inoue: His impression is that of the manager of a major sports chain store.
Nogami: He loves sneakers so much that he has a lot of knowledge of the products.

--Of all the stores at Booyah Base, you can have the most direct conversations at Shrimp Kicks.
Inoue: That's right. Maybe that's how he strikes a balance with his outward appearance.
Nogami: Since he looks like he’s been fried, it seems like something he can tell stories about (laughs).
Inoue: He's a lively and energetic guy. I get the feeling that when he was a student, he’d get to know the clerk or manager of his favorite store and admire them.

--He's one fresh shopkeeper.
Inoue: In Japanese, [instead of Crusty Sean] he’s called Rob, which sounds like lobster, but he’s actually a prawn.

--What!
Inouye: [In Japanese,] I guess the nickname "lobster" stuck [or rather Crusty Sean in English], as his friends called him that in a deliberately Western way. I'm sure his real name is different.

--I would like to ask you about the Octarians of the Octarian army. I heard that there's a rule that an Octarian with two tentacles is strong, as it can shoot continuously with one of those tentacles. How did you decide on a design centered on tentacles?
Inoue: That design was made by the person in charge of designing enemy characters. When Japanese people talk about octopuses, the image that largely comes to mind are the tentacles. Partly because of that, I decided that the tentacle part alone would be stronger as a symbol than the entire octopus. From the very start they're supposed to be underlings, so I guess you could call them 'tesaki' [which is a word that refers to both pawns and fingertips]. So that also got me thinking of this mental picture where this one big guy would tear off his tentacle tips to make this whole crowd of underlings that'd move as a group. However, since the tips wouldn't have much intention in the first place, it seems that they're weak and can't make very complicated movements.

--I see. So it's like a single-celled organism?
Nogami: That's right. It may be that they live only by spinal reflex.
Inoue: There's a research report that the octopuses are industrious while the squids are hedonistic.

--Oh yeah, I asked you about this in a different interview, but are all the Octarians, including the Rival Octolings, serious?
Inoue: The Octarians will diligently carry out their missions, so even if they are told to ink the same spot, they will do so stoically and without question. The Octolings

are capable of behaving just like the player, but I think they are more serious than the Inklings.

--By the way, the octopuses, including the bosses, look like they have dilated pupils, did you have any specific intentions in this design?
Inoue: If they look like they have too much will or emotion, then they look like they might do something a little more complicated, or act more in response to the situation. However, that doesn't match the way the Octarian army operates.
Nogami: The environment is more cheerful in the online modes and more frightening in the single player mode, so we've made the designs to match that impression.
Inoue: I thought it would be better if you could tell from the start if something is an enemy, so I tried to give it a slightly dangerous kind of feeling.

--I think the setting in Octo Valley and in the Octarian world is that there was a big battle in the past, are they aware of that?
Inoue: The Octarians make good use of what's left behind from the past human civilization, and we've included a collage of the heritage of the human world so that it will be similar to, yet contrast, modern Inkopolis. There are a lot of gimmicks in Hero Mode, but I tried to make it a natural part of the game.
Nogami: Some of the objects they've seen before are used incorrectly, such as railroad crossings and telephone poles, but they're used in a different way than they should be.
Inoue: The Octarians are too serious, so they continue to use things in the wrong way. Through hard work they have come up with a mechanism that makes things float when two telephone poles are connected.

--So their science is more advanced than that of the Inklings.
Nogami: They’re superior to the squids in terms of their technology and how they apply it.

---PAGE 4---
The weapons also have a backstory with their manufacturers!

--I'd also like to ask you about weapons and gear. There are different brands of gear, but did you have a specific set of rules for the design of each brand?

Nishimori: We started thinking about brands after we had solidified several things about the world of Splatoon, considering designs that'd fit in with that world. Like one brand was for sports, and one was for street fashion, and one was for the outdoors, and we added more gear the more we solidified our vision. Also, the gear is designed in such a way that matching articles of the same brand would naturally make you look like whatever the gear is intended for.

--Did you separate the design staff for each brand?
Nishimori: We didn't clearly divide them up, and had them work on a variety of things. However, if a person really liked basketball shoes, I would ask them to work on that first. If someone was good at paying attention to detail, then they can make a good product without need for detailed instructions. In other cases, I would ask them to do some research on the Internet before starting work to the point that they could tell me about the product and create something that would make people who like it go "Oh they really get it."

--The weapons don't have a brand, but there are some similarities in terms of color and name, aren't there?
Nishimori: In the game, the brands of the weapons are never mentioned, but we designed them on the assumption that there are several weapon manufacturers behind the scenes.
Nogami: The Splattershot and Splat Charger are actually made by the same manufacturer, but there are weapon models made in collaboration with other gear brands.

From left to right: Splattershot, Tentatek Splattershot, and Splat Charger. Designed with the same brand in mind. Note that the Tentatek Splattershot is marked with Tentatek's logo.

--The feeling is similar to that of sneaker culture that you mentioned at the beginning.
Nishimori: That's right. It's the same feeling in the sense that there are limited colors and logos that are not on the regular version of the products.
Inoue: I wanted to bring out the adolescent mentality of the Inklings, where they are starting to think that foreign products are cooler than domestic ones, so the design of the water guns look more foreign rather than Japanese.

-- If you designed the ink weapons like something true to life it’d look like a realistic weapon, so what design points did you keep in mind?
Nishimori: Many toys in Japan are designed to look like the real thing, but many countries overseas are very serious about guns, and if a child has a realistic gun, it is hard to tell if they’re holding a real gun. I'm always tempted to make something cool that incorporates elements of real weapons, but I try to make sure that the design is safe for parents. However, just like with clothes and shoes, we wanted them to have a sense of reality, so we asked the designers to design the weapons based on everyday tools that might send ink flying.

--I see. Do you have a mechanism in mind for each of your weapons, such as where the ink goes in or ……?
Nishimori: Since it's an ink-shooting weapon, I was thinking of something like …… coming out of the tank, but the weapon is not actually connected to the tank on the back. According to one theory, the ink is supplied to the weapon from the wrist, but that’s something that’s still being researched (laughs).
Inoue: I wanted to make sure that there were things that people who like both weapons and gear would understand. For example, some of the weapons have a seam, or parting line, which come from plastic molds being put together. Those seams are cleaned up when the model is finished properly, but in some cases, especially with toys from overseas, that level of detail is often not taken into consideration and the seams are left as they are, which I think is cool.

--By the way, do you also design the stickers that can be found in the city? Are those stickers supposed to be like advertisements for the brands?
Nishimori: Yes. They were designed by the same team that designed the gear. These stickers have multiple roles, some are designed as a kind of graffiti that the Inklings use to mark their territory, and some are designed as advertisements, as you mentioned.

Stickers can be seen all over the stages.

--Are the graffiti tags like the image of claiming turf in ink battles?

Nishimori: That's right. You can see the graffiti here and there throughout Inkopolis, and they're basically drawn by the Inklings and jellyfish. But if you look closely, you can see some octopus-like things mixed in, so you can get this atmosphere of an invasion. I designed each piece of graffiti with an awareness of if one was drawn by an Inkling or one by an Octarian.
Nogami: There's the feeling that the graffiti is stuck to where it is depending on if an Inkling or Octarian did it.
Nishimori: It's appealing if the placement of a piece of graffiti makes one go "How did they put it up in such and such a place?" or if there's an octopus slapped on top of some squid graffiti. Also, the emergency exit symbol looks like a squid, but sometimes there is an octopus version mixed in. In-game, these arrows are placed to guide you through the back roads, but if you follow the Octarian's arrows, you'll fall into the abyss (laughs).

--The attention to detail is amazing (laughs). In places like the design of the gear and the graffiti on the walls and such, there's Inkling lettering. Is it actually readable?
Nishimori: If you look closely you can read some of it, such as "ikasoumen" and "tacos," but there's a mixture of several languages, including the Inkling and Octarian language, so it would be difficult to decipher.
Inoue: Inklings do not use the same writing system as we do. When you go abroad, you will find that Japanese characters such as "□" [pronounced "no"] are treated as cool characters, but their meanings aren't quite right. In a similar way, the Inklings have adopted parts of human culture, so as long as it looks cool.

---Creator and user, mutual competition---
*[i'm not gonna bother translating this section since it's just about a famitsu contest from so many years ago. All the text in red italics below was translated with DeepL, but has *not* been edited for quality, so proceed with caution.]*

--We received a lot of entries for the Famitsu Squid Fashion Contest held the other day, but what did you think of the entries?
Nishimori: There were many spirited designs. I was surprised to receive so many great works one after another. We are planning to increase the number of gear in the future, and there were some that we thought, "I've always wanted to make one of these," and others that we thought, "I didn't know we could do that! There were some that I thought I wanted to make, and some that I was surprised to find out were in demand, which was very stimulating. I could only choose one design this time, but I hope that I can refer to the designs of those who were not chosen in the future.
Inoue: I am very happy to have received so many entries. I think the game will become more interesting by including both these secondary works and the primary works we publish. Many people have already drawn various illustrations for us, and we would like to respond to them by drawing things that will make people happy.

Nogami As for the direction of the design, I think it is a motif that is easy to appeal to people who like this kind of thing, because it is easy for various people to participate and get excited, or because it is closer to our own world than the fantasy world. As with the fashion contest this time, I'd be happy if people drew various designs and illustrations, and other people found them interesting and said, "I'd like to have something like this.

We received over 800 entries, all of which were very impressive. Thank you very much!
--Finally, do you have a message for the fans?
Nishimori: I'm speaking today as a representative of the design team, but as I talked with the other designers and actually played the game, I realized how much thought went into making it. I'm sure there are a lot of things that were put into the designs that we didn't even know about, so I'd be happy if people could enjoy the world of "Splatoon" even more by playing it for a long time.
Inoue: In all of my designs, I try to keep a sense of "other people may not understand this, but I like it," and I'm honestly happy that many people have sensed my passion for this aspect of the game. I've seen a lot of fan art drawn, and I'm very happy that I've been able to have one-on-one contact with the people who drew them. I'd like to continue to respond to such wishes from everyone in the future.

--Thank you very much!